SIR JAMES A. H. MURRAY

A SELF-PORTRAIT

EDITED BY
GEORGE F. TIMPSON

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With a Commemorative Poem

BY

SIR OWEN SEAMAN, BART.

EDITED BY

GEORGE F. TIMPSON

JOHN BELLOWS LTD
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To
Miss Rosfrith A. N. R. Murray

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PRELUDE	7
LETTER FROM J. A. H. MURRAY TO LORD BRYCE	9
INTERLUDE	22
'HERE ENDETH THE OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY'	31
Poem by Sir Owen Seaman, Bt.	

ILLUSTRATIONS

	OPP. PAGE
THE SCHOOL HOUSE, MILL HILL, ABOUT 1903	8
Watercolour by H. E. Tidmarsh	
THE MURRAY SCRIPTORIUM, MILL HILL ..	9
This has recently been redecorated and refurnished. It is here shown much as Sir James Murray last saw it. (*From an official School publication of about 1940*)	
VERSE BY SIR JAMES MURRAY IN THE *Mill Hill Magazine*	24
Lettering by George W. Brotherton	
EARLY PROOF-SHEETS OF THE OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY	26 & 27
Corrected in Murray's hand. The Dictionary was long known simply as 'Murray'. By permission of the Head Master. Photographs by G. M. R. Graham.	
PROFESSOR JOSEPH WRIGHT	28
From the painting by Ernest Moore. Used by permission of Mrs Joseph Wright.	
SIR JAMES MURRAY IN HIS SCRIPTORIUM AT OXFORD	29

PRELUDE

THE substantive part of this little volume is a long autobiographical letter written in 1903 by Dr J. A. H. Murray, Editor of *The Oxford English Dictionary*, to Dr Bryce, later Lord Bryce, who had been invited to open the Murray Scriptorium at Mill Hill School. Dr Murray had planned the Dictionary, and had edited its first volume, A–ANA, while English Master at Mill Hill School. When, in 1885, he reluctantly left for Oxford, to devote himself wholly to the Dictionary, Murray gave his Scriptorium to the School as a leisure-time reading and writing room for the boys. The corrugated iron building was taken down, and moved from the garden at Sunnyside to the edge of the Playground (called today the Quad, but then a sloping ground with buildings only on part of the north side). For seventeen years the Scriptorium was greatly appreciated; it became also a gallery hung with photographs of School teams. In 1902, despite the efforts of the School fire brigade, the Scriptorium was burned to the ground; there is a well-known City solicitor who remembers sitting on a burst in the hosepipe to conserve the water—an unusual exemplification

of the Mill Hill motto 'Et Virtutem et Musas'. In the next year a charming little building arose in place of the old Scriptorium, furnished as a reading room and having over its fireplace a raised inscription in gilded lettering and a portrait of Dr Murray at work on the Dictionary in his Oxford Scriptorium.

Lord Bryce, having been invited to open the new Murray Scriptorium, asked Dr Murray for some information about his life. The resultant letter has only recently been discovered by Miss A. P. Deeley among Lord Bryce's papers. It was published in the *Bodleian Library Record* for May 1956, and was brought to my attention by Mr R. J. Dobell of Tunbridge Wells. It is here reproduced by permission of Miss Rosfrith A. N. R. Murray, daughter of Sir James Murray (as the lexicographer became in 1908); also by permission of her brother the Reverend A. H. Jowett Murray and of her niece Miss K. E. Murray.

The commemorative poem by Sir Owen Seaman is published by kind permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.

MAIDENHILL HOUSE,
STONEHOUSE,
GLOUCESTERSHIRE.
March 25th, 1957.

THE SCHOOL HOUSE, MILL HILL, ABOUT 1903

THE MURRAY SCRIPTORIUM
Mill Hill School

From

Dr. Murray,
OXFORD. } (Postal Address.)

Residence: (*Sunnyside, Banbury Road.*)

15 Dec^{r} 1903

Dear D^{r} Bryce,

The less you say about *me* on Friday, the better pleased I shall be. I thought the occasion was to do honour to the birth place of the Dictionary, and to bring out the connexion of Mill Hill School with it, & that I should come in only incidentally, and when it could not be avoided. A subconscious fear that it might to some extent turn out otherwise, was one reason for my steady & repeated refusal to be present, ever since Dr McClure wrote to me about it in September. It was only last week that upon the persistent entreaties of the Old Millhillians, my own Old Boys, I consented to come; but it really *must not* be made an occasion of panegyrizing me, or dragging me into the foreground, and of thus giving scoffers occasion to say that you have reversed the role of Antony, and come not to bury Caesar, but to praise him. Better wait for the latter until you do come to bury me; then praise nor blame will disturb me. At present I feel it somewhat like getting me to attend my own obsequies, and I should really like to see the

Dictionary finished first! I have lived & worked for it so long, that I should like to be able to say *Nunc dimittis*.

It is one of the hateful characteristics of a degenerate age, that the idle world will not let the worker alone, accept his offering of work, & appraise it for itself, but must insist upon turning *him* inside out, and knowing all about him, and really troubling itself a great deal more about his little peculiarities & personal pursuits, than his abiding work.

I should like to stop here and tell you nothing about myself. A ' voice crying in the wilderness ' has always been for me a sort of glorious ideal; and instead of raking up every scrap of useless detail about Chaucer & Shakspere, and Burns and Lamb, I often wish we knew nothing about any of them—especially of Burns & Lamb—but their splendid work.

Just to help you to orient yourself, however, and in the confidence that you—as a brother Scotsman —will not misuse it, I will try to give an outline answer to your inquiry into my philological history. I was *always* interested in language, especially in its *written* forms, since before I remember anything. I am reported to have known my letters before I was 18 months old, and when at that age a little brother was born to me, and I was introduced to him, it used to be told that I

brought my primer—or *reading-made-easy*, and said ' I will show little brudder " round O " and " crooked S." ' It was the greatest treat I could offer him. My mother who died at 80, a grand old Scotch woman, used to treasure up scraps of paper written in those days in which I had copied out words of Latin or Greek from books in which they occurred, & a Hebrew alphabet from the CXIX Psalm in a neighbour's big Bible. Of these I have only dim memories, but I have seen the scraps. I *do* remember a vigorous attack at the age of 7 upon a page of the Chinese Gospel of St. John, reproduced in the *Juvenile Missionary Magazine*, which I copied many times in very scrawly Chinese, and learned the characters for *Beginning*, *God*, *word*, *light*, *life*, *witness*, *man*, etc. by observing their recurrence in the columns, which I could write from memory many years after ; indeed I fancy I could tell which is which still. Both my father & mother were of good family, but both families had come down in the world, and they were poor, and I had no chance of learning Latin till I was nearly 12, nor French for 2 years later. Greek, I learned mainly by myself two years later still. I was immensely indebted to Cassell's *Popular Educator* when it came out. After this, I had a sort of mania for learning languages ; every new language was a new delight, no matter what it was Hebrew or Tongan, Russian

or Caffre, I swallowed them all, at least so as to master grammar & structure, but rarely did enough at the vocabulary. Still I at one time or another could read in a sort of way 25 or more languages, at most of which I could still do something with the help of a dictionary. I was Junior Assistant Master in the Grammar School in Hawick for 3 years from the age of $17\frac{1}{2}$ to $20\frac{1}{2}$; then from 20 to 27 Master of the Subscription School called Hawick Academy. That was my great learning-time, when I made incursions into nearly all the sciences, botany, geology, entomology, anatomy, chemistry, mechanics, archaeology, electricity. I made Graham Bell, then a boy of 14, I a man of 24, his first electric battery, when I was attending his Father's Vacation Course in Vocal Physiology and Elocution in Edin^{r}; he had confided to me his desire to know something about electricity, and we set about it in the old garden at Trinity near Edin^{r} He calls me sportively 'the grandfather of the telephone'—a very remote ancestor, I tell him. At the age of 19 (!!) I was one of the founders of the Hawick Archaeological Society, which indeed I named, for the old men who were interested were going to call it the *Antiquarian* Society, when I demonstrated the superior potency of the word *Archaeological*, with such effect that they made me Secy. which I continued to be till I left Hawick in 1864. I am alas the only surviving

member of its first years, and the Hawick people greatly want me to go to a Jubilee Celebration in 1906—so you must not bury me yet! In those days we were *men* at 19: I was earning my living, writing articles in the local paper, speaking at public meetings—always on the side of freedom and equality, and corresponding with learned archaeologists, geologists, & naturalists. To that time dates my friendship with Sir A. Geikie, his brother, & Dr Young of Glasgow, all then in the Survey—and a lesson on geology which I gave one day to Sir Roderick Murchison (without knowing who he was)—I took him for a simple tourist who was going to be imposed upon with a sham fossil, that a man wanted to sell him, and pointed out to him 'the utter absence of any organic structure.' How the Geikies did 'roar' when they heard of it! This was at 19; nowadays 'boys' at 19 are leaving school & competing for scholarships, and preparing to begin life at 24. I taught from 17½, & never cost my father a penny thenceforth.

About 1858, I think, the late Prince Lucien Bonaparte began to get versions of scriptural books done into local dialect; a Scotch St. Matthew was done by Henry Scott Riddell. A specimen of the Sermon on the Mount was reprinted in our local paper, and greatly disappointed me; it did not seem *living* Scotch at all. I tried my hand at doing better, had to invent a

phonetic spelling for our Teviotdale sounds, abandoned Matthew, did half of Acts, & finally Ruth and Jonah—Ruth I published after as a specimen in my *Lowland Scotch* book. I planned & partly completed a phonetic key to Jamieson's Dicty. Then I noticed that Scottish grammar was not English, and I made a *Scotch Grammar*, showing that all the things that people called ' bad grammar ' because they would be so in English, were ' good grammar ' in Scotch. I read papers in these linguistic (& many other) subjects to the Archaeol. Soc. A stray copy of Bohn's Alfred the Great by Pauli with the Anglo-Saxon text of Orosius, picked up on a stall in Leith, opened a new world to me. I simply bathed & basked in it. Then at a meeting of the Berwicksh. Nat. Club at Alnwick, at which I represented our H^{k} society, I took part in a discussion of some local names, & showed some knowledge of Anglo-Saxon, on which Canon Greenwell came & introduced himself, asked where I had learned this. I told him and spoke of the difficulty of getting books. He sent me next day a large boxful from his own Library & that of the Chapter—there were Hooker and Lye & Thorpe & Thwaites, & the Heptateuch, & Durham Gospels—it was glorious ! I made MS. copies of several whole books ; I have them still & have often used them for the Dicty., to save a visit to Bodleian.

I wished to teach the world Anglo-Saxon. I prepared at the age of 20 a Grammar & First Reading-book, which I sent to the London publishers of Ahn's series & other language books known to me. They sent them back, & said such things would never pay; there was no demand for them; they were merely interesting to half a dozen antiquarians. I have the MS. still. From one of the books Canon Greenwell sent me I learned Gothic—*Moeso-gothic* we called it then. I wanted the Gospels of Ulfilas greatly: James Douglas of Cavers (blessings on his memory) who had presented me with Raske's Anglo-Saxon Gram., now gave me a splendid copy of the text of the *Codex Argenteus*. I analysed every word in the Gospels, prepared a complete grammar & set of paradigms, which I never published; tho' when Prof. Skeat did one 10 or 15 years later, I could not help feeling how much better mine was! I worked on at Scotch in the light of Anglo-Saxon, & began to dream of sending my versions to Prince Lucien to see if he would print them.

In 1862 I was married; in 1863 my beloved & refined wife had a little daughter; she never recovered, fell into consumption, baby died, *she* died—a marriage, a birth, two deaths, all in 3 short years! To save her life, I had disposed of my school in Hawick, & came to the south of

England, I could not afford to go farther, & I got a place in the Chartered Bank of India in Threadneedle Street. Doctors thought she might be saved with a milder winter; she survived the winter, but withered away with the summer, and I was left alone in London, doing uncongenial work, which yet I now see was useful for the Dictionary. Melville Bell had come to London & invented his 'Visible Speech,' he introduced me to A. J. Ellis, & took me to the Philological Society to hear his paper, told them I knew a lot about Scotch, & they asked me for a paper (which became the germ of my *Dialect of the Southern Counties of Scotland*). Then I learned of the existence of the Early English Text Society, & got hold of its edition of Hampole's Prick of Conscience in Northern Middle English. What a revelation! here in 14th c. Eng. of Yorkshire, I found my Southern Scotch in full bloom in an earlier form as a literary language, with its own grammar, precisely as I had made it out for Southern Scotch! This was in 1867. I rewrote my Scottish Grammar on historical principles, & thenceforth felt my interest more & more concentrated on English & its dialects. I did not lose my interest in Russian or Hindustani or Achæmenian inscriptions, but I had not time for them, with all this new world of historical English. At the Phil. Soc. I met Dr Weymouth & criticized

his papers. He asked who I was, learned that I was a bank clerk, had been a Schoolmaster, was an F.E.I.S.*, & would probably be willing to return to scholastic work. He offered me a mastership at Mill Hill. I had married again, my present very able, wise, and helpful wife, a queen among women—we considered it & removed to Mill Hill, & were there 15 years, the central years of my life, and its Arcadian time. I went there a young man of 30, with 2 babies & left a middle-aged man of 45 with 9 children. I should never have left it but for the Dicty. I still look back to its rustic sweetness with tender longings.

There I took London Matric; 1st & 2nd BA. I was recommended to Black's to write the article English Language for the Encyclop. Brit., and prob. I knew the subject as well as anybody in 1873, better than most. Edin[r] gave me an LL.D.

A little later Harpers of N.Y. & Macmillans here wanted to get up a big dictionary to compete with Worcester & Webster. Somebody (I never knew who) told them I was the man to edit it. Macmillans sent for me & proposed it. I demurred, unless the dictionary was to be something vastly superior to any existing one; I could not waste my time nor interrupt my work at Mill Hill to make merely another Webster. They asked 'Had not the Philol. Soc. once contemplated making a

*Fellow of the Educational Institute of Scotland.

Dictionary, & collected a quantity of materials ? could not these be got ? I knew nothing about the Phil. Society's scheme, which had died out some years before I joined the Society. But I inquired, got hold of some of the materials & with their aid prepared a specimen of what I thought a dictionary ought to be, which Macmillans put into type. Alas ! its extent was far beyond their intentions, & still further beyond Harpers'. A whole year was spent in trying to contract my notions & expand theirs ; but we never met. When it had reached the utmost minimum that I thought of any value, it was still 50 per cent bigger than their utmost ; so all came to an end.

But my specimen had been shown in the Phil. Soc. It showed what was possible. Everybody said if this could be done, how grand. ' Let us see if no publisher or body will look at it '. The specimen was shown to many, admired by many— the Cambridge Pitt Press very much regretted they had not money to tackle it. Finally Oxford looked at it with interest ; had me here to see me & hear me explain it, got me to prepare fresh specimens of other words selected by them, to see that the *Carp-Casseage* specimen was a fair sample, had many discussions ; & finally, after 2 years, said they would undertake the Dictionary, if I would edit it. Curiously enough I had never asked myself if I was prepared to do this. My

interest in it was purely unselfish. I wanted to see an ideal Dictionary & to show what I meant by one: *who* was to do it never crossed my mind. My own ideals were at the time all wrapped up in Mill Hill School; it was my little world; the time might come when I should be head of it, and I saw at once that the idea of my editing the Dictionary brought in serious considerations. I got a fortnight to decide; it was the most anxious fortnight my wife & I ever passed or ever may. We should have decided against it; but the dictionary would not be realized; when I hinted this decision to Bartholomew Price, he told me then that it would be all over with the Dictionary; the Delegates had understood all through, when I showed specimens, discussed points, & met objections, that I was willing to do it—they had seen me, heard me, knew me, believed that I could do it; they knew nothing about the Philological Society; they must have a responsible *man;* and if I 'drew back' & another man was looked for & found, the whole proceeding must begin anew, off at the ground, and 'believe me' he said 'it will never get as far as this again in our time'. This was then the alternative; I must sacrifice my dreams & hopes about Mill Hill, which had grown for 15 years, or the Dictionary ideal must fail. My wife bravely bade me choose the Dictionary; so did two of the Governors whom I consulted;

Dr Weymouth also promised to do all he could to facilitate my position; and the Governors agreed to let me withdraw ⅓ or even ½ my time from the school, on condition of my sacrificing the same proportion of my salary. So I chose the Dictionary; but it was, I felt, a great sacrifice. As events turned out, it was a greater one than I thought: I dreamed of 10 years hard work; it has proved a life time's. And half of my time was not enough: the Dictionary demanded it all. In 5 years, I had to sever myself from M.H. entirely, & come to Oxford, giving the original Scriptorium erected in my garden at Sunnyside out in the village to the boys as a Reading Room; it was lifted up & placed in the Play ground, where I understand the Memorial building has been erected. This was in 1885; more than 18 years of incessant toil have followed. I have got able joint-Editors and Assistants, & we are still years from the end. I virtually bound myself to never ending toil, very different from the work of school with its recurrent holidays. I sometimes mourn, & chafe.

Yet I think it was God's will. In times of faith, I am sure of it. I look back & see that every step of my life has been as it were imposed upon me—not a thing of choice; and that the whole training of my life with its multifarious & irregular incursions into nearly every science & many arts, seems to have had the express purpose of fitting me to do

this dictionary. I know philology & the history of the language intimately, and enough of nearly every other science & subject—chemistry, botany, entomology, archaeology, banking, commerce, stock exchange, to treat their terminology without help, or *to know when I do not know*, & need to ask help. I can at least write as a geologist to Prof. Geikie, as a botanist to Sir W. Thiselton Dyer, as an anatomist to Sir J. Burdon Sanderson, as a chemist to Roscoe or Thorpe, and not as the man in the street merely. And I know when an article I want to quote is wrong.

So I work on with a firm belief (at most times) that I am doing what God has fitted me for, & so made my duty; & a hope that He will strengthen me to see the end of it. He has been so good to me, & led me so wondrously, that I cannot but trust Him. But I am only an instrument, only the means that He has provided, & there is no credit due to me, except that of trying to do my duty; *Deo soli gloria*; and I wish from my heart that people would accept my work at the Dictionary as my simple effort to do my duty, and leave me quietly to do it, giving me wherewith to do it *well*, & without the pecuniary struggle that it has so often been, since I undertook it. Yet this too is no doubt also the divine plan for me, and will one day also be seen to have been all for the best.

J. A. H. MURRAY.

INTERLUDE

THE foregoing letter constitutes a remarkable self-portrait. It only remains to touch in a few details.

When Dr Richard Francis Weymouth was elected Head Master of the newly re-founded Mill Hill School in 1869, he had just become the first Doctor of Letters of London University, and had been a member of the Philological Society for eighteen years. He was conversant with Icelandic, Anglo-Saxon and French as well as with the classical languages, and during the next sixteen years published a pioneer study of the pronunciation of Chaucer's English, an article on the Homeric epithet ὄβριμος (which drew the attention of Mr Gladstone and resulted in that statesman's distributing the prizes at Mill Hill in 1879), a book on the Devonshire Dialect, and the first edition of *The Resultant Greek Testament*, an attempt to establish the original text. After his retirement in 1886, Dr Weymouth worked for the rest of his life on a revision of this, and on his noble *New Testament in Modern Speech*, which was published posthumously at the expense of the Old Millhillians Club, and has become a classic. Dr Weymouth was a leading figure in the movement to establish philology as a major subject of study, and in applying it to other languages than the ancient classics. But his greatest service

to philology, and to humanity, was his discovery of James A. H. Murray, and his generous purpose to give the latter his opportunity in life. This purpose remained undimmed when his assistant-master emerged into world-wide fame.

Murray and Weymouth met at the Philological Society. Weymouth was a Head Master of many years' experience, and he knew a born teacher when he saw one. Murray had no degree; his teaching experience had been only in Scottish day-schools, and he had for some years been out of touch with school life. Although Murray had had no experience of English Public School life, Weymouth offered him the post of English master at Mill Hill, and instead of burdening him with boarding-house duties, gave him a delightful home and garden at Sunnyside, a short distance from the School, together with freedom to pursue his philological studies.

This policy paid rich dividends. The tall, red-bearded Scotsman with the twinkling, humorous eyes caught from the start the Public School spirit. His classes, especially in Shakespeare, were original and stimulating. His reading of the lessons in Chapel made a lasting impression. He took charge of the issue of pocket-money and of school books, frequently won the Master's Race at the Athletic Sports, founded a Natural History Society and a Museum, was the life and soul of

concerts and of the debates and Magazine, and threw his home open to the boys, many of whom remained his friends for life. Among these friends were Sir Owen Seaman, Bt., Sir W. Ryland Adkins K.C., M.P., Nathaniel Micklem K.C., M.P., Lord Justice Scrutton, Dr J. R. Tanner, and Professor George Hare Leonard of Bristol University.

Murray began at once to work for his London B.A., which he took in 1873; it was eclipsed a year later by Edinburgh's grant to him of its Doctorate of Civil Law, *honoris causa*, in recognition of his editorship at Mill Hill of Scottish medieval texts and the publication in 1873 of his epoch-making book on *The Dialects of the Southern Counties of Scotland*. From that day to the end, Murray always wore his Edinburgh Doctor's biretta when at work, though he became the recipient of eight other Doctorates, including those of Oxford and Cambridge.

When, in 1879, there came the challenge to edit *The New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, which Dr Weymouth had known of since its inception in 1858, all the resources of Mill Hill were put at Murray's disposal. His work was lightened, and among the official Readers for the Dictionary, still listed in the Introduction to what in 1895 became *The Oxford English Dictionary*, are nine names from Mill Hill—those of Dr Weymouth and the Misses B. and M. Weymouth,

Joy thæ Mylne Hill, thy mylne is gone I trow,
Yet on thine Hyll shall grindynge be enow.
Where churls were wont the corne for breade
to grind
Shall many a younge man brede of know–
ledge fonde.
If with thy geist at times there mingle chaffe
Wisdome, I wœne, oft lurketh in a laugh!

Sir James Murray

Verse by Sir James Murray in the *Mill Hill Magazine*

of two masters, H. A. and A. Erlebach (the latter becoming a permanent assistant in 1882), of Mrs Murray and her two eldest sons, H. J. R. and E. T. Murray, who were at the School, and of Owen Seaman, who had been in Dr Murray's classes from 1874 to 1878, before going on to Shrewsbury. Later, another former pupil from Mill Hill, E. Hampden-Cook, read widely for the Dictionary. H. J. R. Murray alone sent in 27,000 slips bearing quotations. Daughters of local tradesmen, educated at the Village School, attained a high degree of proficiency in sorting the slips. The Dictionary was almost a Mill Hill ' project '.

An article by Dr Murray in the *Mill Hill Magazine* provided the only quotation illustrating the rare word *anamorphose*, ' to distort into a monstrous projection ', and this is the only quotation from a School Magazine in the whole work. The first batch of copy was dispatched from Mill Hill to the Clarendon Press on April 19th, 1882, almost exactly halfway between the foundation of the School on April 29th, 1807 and the 150th Anniversary of that event in the current year. The first volume of the Dictionary, published on February 1st, 1884, had a Preface dated from Oxford. This Preface laid down the plan for the whole work, a plan so well-judged that it underlay every volume, including the last, which was not completed until February, 1928. This plan had

been worked out in the Scriptorium at Sunnyside, Mill Hill, and the School possesses an early proof-sheet, corrected in Murray's hand, dated 'The Scriptorium, Mill Hill, Sept., 1883'. It was his great happiness at Mill Hill, the sense of freedom and growth which animated the whole School during those first years of the New Foundation, and the generous treatment accorded him by the Head Master, which gave James Murray the elasticity and courage to attempt and accomplish what others had failed to do. The slightness of Mill Hill's connection with the older Universities at this time set it free to experiment boldly in a subject only just beginning to attract attention at Oxford and Cambridge.

The proposal to create *The New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* had come from an Old Harrovian, Dean R. C. Trench of Westminster, in 1858, and the first Editor had been Herbert Coleridge, an Old Etonian. From his garden Murray could see the spire of Harrow Church and (with glasses) the Royal Standard waving above Eton from the Round Tower of Windsor Castle. He could never have fulfilled his task during the first seven years of Editorship at Mill Hill, but for the financial, philological and moral support of a neighbour, Mr Henry Hucks Gibbs, later Lord Aldenham.

The removal to Oxford was followed by thirty

PREFACE TO PART I.

THE following pages present the first instalment of a work for which preparations were commenced more than a quarter of a century ago. The story of its origin and progress has been told at length in various literary journals and magazines*, and is familiar to most persons interested in the study of the English language. For the present, it is sufficient to say that the scheme originated in a resolution of the Philological Society, passed in 1857, at the suggestion of the present Archbishop of Dublin (Dr. Trench) to collect materials for the preparation of a new English Dictionary, which by the completeness of its vocabulary, and by its historical method of treating words and illustrating their life and use, should be worthy of the English language and of English scholarship. For this purpose it was resolved to begin at the beginning, and extract anew typical quotations for all words, from all the great English writers of all ages, from all the writers on special subjects whose works might best illustrate the history and use of words employed in special senses; from all writers whatever before the 15th century, and from as many as possible of the more important writers of later times. Several hundred readers at once entered on the task of selecting and transcribing these quotations, and many eminent scholars undertook to arrange the materials so gathered. Among those who in various capacities thus lent their services to the work, may be mentioned—Dr. Trench himself; the late Mr. Herbert Coleridge, the first general editor (who died [illegible] arranging for the press specimens of his proposed treatment of some early words); Mr. F. J. Furnivall, M.A., his joint-editor and successor; the late Dr. Guest, Mr. Hensleigh Wedgwood, M.A., the late Professor Malden, the late Professor T. H. Key, the late Right Hon. Lord Lyttelton, the late Mr. Thomas Watts, of the British Museum; Mr. Fitzedward Hall, D.C.L.; Miss C. M. Yonge; Professor E. Dowden, M.A.; Mr. Henry Hucks Gibbs, M.A.; Mr. W. M. Rossetti, the Rev. (now Professor) W. W. Skeat, M.A.; the late Sir John Richardson, K.C.B.; the late Miss Harriet Martineau; the late Hon. G. P. Marsh, Mr. R. Grant White. The time required to complete even this preliminary work of reading books and collecting quotations proved so long, that several promoters of the work died, and many became absorbed in other duties, before it was possible to take in hand the actual preparation of the intended Dictionary; but the materials continued to accumulate till upwards of two million quotations had been collected, parts of which were also arranged and more or less prepared for use in the contemplated work.

For several years no further steps were taken, and it was not till 1878 that specimens prepared by me from these materials, on behalf of the Council of the Philological Society, were submitted by them to the Delegates of the Clarendon Press, who consented, upon certain conditions, to bear the expense of printing and publishing the Dictionary, upon the preparation of which in its present form I entered in 1879. Careful examination of the quotations and other materials, now for the first time collected in one place, and arranged in a continuous alphabetical series, showed that a good deal still remained to be done in order to complete them. Accordingly a new appeal was made to volunteers to supplement the earlier reading by collecting

* Among these may be mentioned *Fraser's Magazine*, Sept. 1859, the *Cornhill Magazine* June 1861; *Fortn. Rev.* Feb. 1865, the *Leisure Hour*, June 1868; the *Athenæum*, April 26 and Sept. 13, 1879; the *Academy*, May 3 and Sept. 13, 1879, and Jan. 6, 1883; the *Times*, Jan. 31, 1883; the *New York Nation*, Sept. 4, 1879; the *Guide*, August 1883, &c.

Early proof sheet of Preface of *The New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, preserved at Mill Hill School

H. Power, Esq., M.B (Joint Editor of the Sydenham Society's Lexicon); Dr. R. C. A. Prior (author of 'Plant Names'); Prof. J. Rhys, Jesus Coll., Oxford; P. L. Sclater, Esq., F.R.S., Sec. of the Zoological Society; Prof. Sayce, M.A., Oxford; Rev. Prof. Skeat, M.A., Cambridge; Miss L. Toulmin Smith; Prof. Geo. Stephens, Copenhagen; Rev. Prof. Stubbs, M.A., Oxford; Henry Sweet, Esq., M.A.; W. H. Wesley, Esq., Royal Astronomical Soc.; Dr. R. F. Weymouth, Mill Hill; W. White, Esq., Royal Society; W. Aldis Wright, Esq., LL.D, Cambridge, &c.

It will, of course, be understood that none of these are responsible for the use made of their help in the Dictionary. It has not, as a rule, been possible to submit to them the articles for which their assistance was asked, in which ignorance may have mistaken or inadvertence misrepresented their communications: in any such case the Editor alone must bear the blame.

Mention must also be made of the help of my immediate assistants in the preparation of the Dictionary, and in passing the sheets through the press; especially of the invaluable labours of Mr. Alfred Erlebach, B.A., which have been conjoined with my own in the treatment of almost every word: his services, as well as those of Mr. John Mitchell, Mr. H. F. F. Ruthven, and Mr. J. B. Johnston, M.A., are gratefully acknowledged.

It is with no disparagement of the lexicographical labours of the many scholars who, since the appearance of the tiny 8vo. of Henry Cockeram in 1623, have built, each, on the structure of his predecessors, and laboured to perfect the fabric of English lexicography (including, as they do, such eminent names as Blount, Bailey, Johnson, Richardson, Todd, Webster, Worcester, and others), that the present work seeks to do for English words something different from what their cumulative labours have effected. It is because of the novelty of its aims, the originality of its method, and the fresh start which it makes from materials never before collected, that it claims, in a distinctive sense, the title of the New English Dictionary.

JAMES A. H. MURRAY.

THE SCRIPTORIUM, MILL HILL, LONDON, N.W.
Sept. 1883.

Close of the Preface

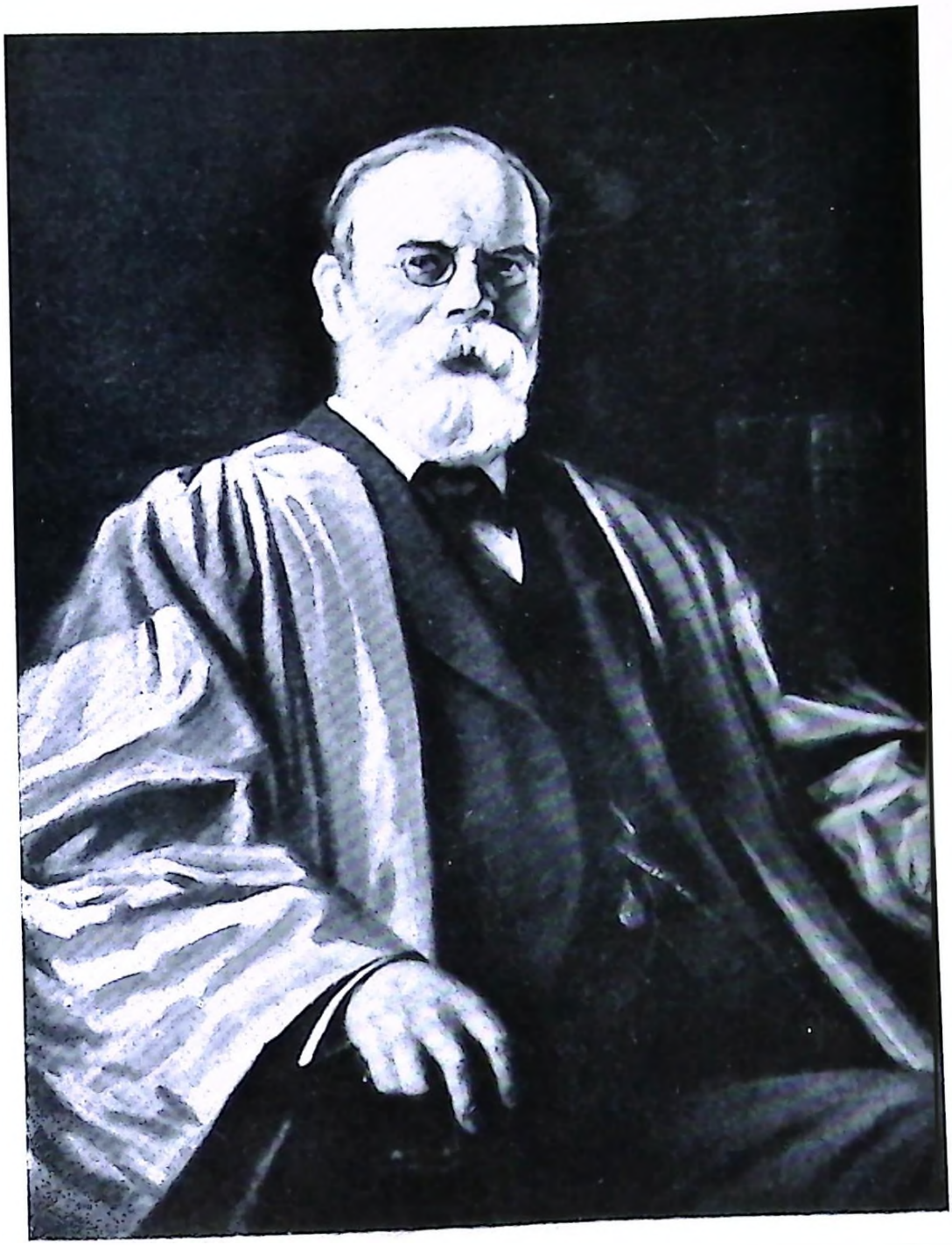
years of absolute devotion to the Dictionary, a devotion sustained, as Murray revealed, by daily prayer, which often lifted him above apparently insuperable obstacles. He allowed himself only short mountaineering holidays and one voyage to South Africa, lightening his long days by walking and cycling, by occasional hours in his garden, with his stamp collection and his collections of nature specimens. For six days a week, and twelve to fifteen hours a day, Murray toiled in his Scriptorium at Oxford, sometimes slipping away to gain counsel from Dr Joseph Wright, who was editing *The English Dialect Dictionary*, and who, like Murray, had educated himself on Cassell's *Popular Educator*. Wright's only schooling had been at the part-time school at the Saltaire Mills, Saltaire, Yorkshire, which was directed by a family closely connected with Mill Hill. Like Murray, Wright had been a schoolmaster for some years, but he had had the advantage of studying philology at the University of Heidelberg, to which he travelled on foot and where he maintained himself by teaching English and mathematics, and also at Leipzig.

These two giants of lexicography became the greatest friends, the knowledge of each supplementing that of the other. Murray knew twenty-five languages to Wright's sixteen, but the Yorkshireman had had the advantage of formal training under the leading philologists of Germany:

Osthoff, Leskien, Brugmann and Zarncke. Murray and Wright had each published discerning studies of the dialects of his native countryside. Each also recognised that he had an appointed task to fulfil, which no-one else could perform in the same way. In each case, the man and the opportunity met at just the right moment in history. Murray was by eighteen years the older of the two, but in personal tastes they had much in common. Both were sincere Christians, both came of good families which had met misfortune, both had long-lived and wonderful mothers, and both had ideal partners in married life. They were alike in their genial humanity and sense of humour, their love for young people and their warm interest in their pupils. It was one of the great privileges of my youth to have been brought into contact with both men. I knew Professor Wright in his home, but only saw and heard Sir James Murray on successive Foundation Days at Mill Hill.

Another warm friend of James Murray at Oxford was Dr Henry Bradley, his first co-Editor. Bradley, like Wright, was a largely self-educated man. At the ' Dictionary Dinner ' held in 1897, at Queen's College, Henry Bradley declared that it would have been a national calamity if anyone but Murray had been appointed Editor of the Dictionary.

Reading of the whole of 18th century English



PROFESSOR JOSEPH WRIGHT

SIR JAMES MURRAY
in his Oxford Scriptorium

literature for the Dictionary was undertaken by a group of American Colleges and Universities, under the direction of Professor Francis March of Lafayette College. In America there was great enthusiasm for the work, and it was an American critic, H. A. Mencken, who spoke of the ' O.E.D.' as the perfect companion in solitude. After the Authorised Version of the Bible and the works of Shakespeare, *The Oxford English Dictionary* is the greatest cultural link between the English-speaking and English-reading peoples of the world.

Sir James Murray passed away on July 26th, 1915, his hope of seeing the Dictionary complete unattained. For thirty-six years he had been the leading figure in all its work, and had personally edited 7,207 pages of the final total of 15,487. His volumes are A–D, H–K, O–P and T. It was left to two co-Editors, Sir W. A. Craigie and Sir C. T. Onions, to complete the work, but the Murray family was represented on the final staff of the Dictionary by Miss Rosfrith A. N. R. Murray, to whom this little book is therefore dedicated. The completion of the Dictionary was announced in *The Periodical* for February 15th, 1928. The last volume to appear dealt with letter W — X, Y and Z had been finished already. In 1897 the Dictionary had, by permission, been dedicated to H.M. Queen Victoria; the completed work was now dedicated to H.M.

King George V, who had taken peculiar pleasure in bestowing a knighthood on Sir James Murray.

A commemorative Exhibition was held in The Murray Scriptorium, Mill Hill School, and in the pages of *Punch* appeared, from the pen of Sir Owen Seaman, the following commemorative poem, which reflects just that blend of whimsical humour and love of learning which had so distinguished the great teacher and lexicographer whom it celebrated.

HERE ENDETH THE OXFORD DICTIONARY

To the glorious shade of Sir James Murray, originator and first Editor of the Oxford Dictionary.

Oh, somewhere on Elysian plains
  Where the light breath of Zephyr stirs
The bosky groves and silvan lanes
  Reserved for Lexicographers;
Where with your kind in that long spell
  Of peace which no intruder varies
You couch on beds of asphodel
  Gently discussing Dictionaries;—

I greet you, Master of my youth,
  Whose heavy task it was to teach
My callow brain, as yet uncouth,
  Facts that concerned the parts of speech;
Who not to LITTRÉ, no, and not
  To JOHNSON'S self played second fiddle;
Who shared an honoured shelf with SCOTT
  And likewise held your own with LIDDELL.

SIR JAMES A. H. MURRAY

The happy news I here convey,
  How Oxford, your adopted home
(*Alma Noverca*), sends today
  Hot from her Press your crowning tome ;
No fear for what you left unsaid
  (*As felt for Edwin Drood*) can trouble you,
For tardy in the wake of Z
  Here comes the vol. that ends with W.

A letter chosen not amiss
  To end in native English style
An English Book of Words like this—
  So you will say, I think, and smile
And stroke your great beard's snowy crop
  That once I knew as red as wine is,
And set on your prodigious *OP*
  The seal of consummation—FINIS.

O.S.